1: Lowie E-5 (1926) 1939 NT20 Washo NT20

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[177]

appeared at the site. Then several small boys were taken into the ring, some of the girls having several times called out in English, "Join in!" I was struck with the amount of English spoken by Indians in conversing with one another, not only by those of school age, but even by young men of possibly twenty-five to thirty years.

Suddenly, several men entered the ring, which henceforth was apparently enlarged after every intermission. The men were all together in one half of the circle. In the darkness I could not make out precisely how the dancers were holding one another. It seemed that between the first man and the last woman in the ring a slight gap was left so that they never held each other. During these dances the girl with the pole held it aloft—not as in the first dance witnessed—so that it rose something like ten feet above the ground. The step remained uniform—a slow clockwise walk breaking into a lively movement as the dancers warmed up. The women continued to leap; the men rarely jumped, at least did not do it so regularly, rather substituting two quick leftward steps.

At one stage of the performance, a woman appeared within the circle, holding up both hands and approaching the ring of dancers, some of whom seemed to snatch what she was holding in her hands. At one time I also noticed the girl with the pole dancing inside the circle with her companion.

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[534]
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All the dancers were dressed in trade clothes. There was no musical instrument. The dance was to last all through the night, with an intermission for a feast. Not perceiving any new features, I left before midnight.

MARRIAGE

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About a year or two after her puberty dance a girl would get married. One account makes the suitor ask her father's permission with an offer of buckskin, shell beads, and other gifts. If the parents liked him, they called him to marry their daughter. According to Bill, the families of the prospective bridegroom and bride exchanged gifts, the boy's father bringing dried venison to the household of the bride, whose mother gave mush in return. The giving of presents to the bride's parents is called kumyu'ga, the return gift umlagu"wa'a. This exchange continued for several months. Sometimes a youth and a girl met at a dance and came to live together without parental arrangements. The informant, at first noncommittal about his preference, added: "Catching himself is the wrong way, it looks to me. The parents' giving grub to each other is a pretty good way."

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[768]

Normally, the young couple settled with the bride's family, the bridegroom killing game for his parents-in-law, who wanted to keep their daughter and therefore had the husband stay with them, too. This arrangement lasted during the old people's lifetime. When they died, their house was burnt and the young couple moved. Bill described residence as matrilocal *or* patrilocal, but some of his own statements indicate a preference for the former. Jack's reminiscences support this view. When small, he lived with his parents, his maternal grandparents, and some of his mother's brothers. Oddly enough, he said

2: Barrett E-5 (no date) 1917 NT20 Washo NT20

boulder serves as a mortar (lam), upon which foods are ground with rough cobble stone pestles (bĭ'tsik). Such a mortar is shown in plate III, fig. 2, while three typical pestles are shown in plate IV, figs. 1-3. No basketry or other retainer is used as a hopper with this mortar, but a special brush, such as that shown in plate V, fig. 2, is employed to brush the meal back within the area in which the grinding is being done.

This meal brush (kŭmbĕ'it) is made by placing the flattened leaves of the soap root one upon another so that the natural curvature of the bottom of the leaf forms, with its stiff fibers, a claw-like brush especially adapted to gathering in the meal which has scattered. It is also used as a hair brush. These leaves are obtained largely by trade from the Miwok, as the plant does not grow on the eastern slope of the Sierra. With the constant wear of the grinding in one spot a cup, often six inches in diameter and as many in depth, is worn in the boulder. Frequently the top of such a boulder is used by several women at once. Thus it is not uncommon to find as many as a dozen such cups on the top of a single boulder. The mortar here shown is not quite typical in that it has a considerable area hollowed out about the cupping. Usually the surface of the boulder is flat except for the pits themselves.

The pestles, as a rule, show no special shaping. Any well worn cobble stone, usually of granite and of a convenient shape and size, like those shown in plate IV, figs. 1-3, is chosen and used directly. Sometimes such a stone may have its edges pecked off to give it a more desirable form, as in the case of the pestle shown in fig. 2, but usually this is not necessary.

Another type of pestle is the rather carefully worked, cylindrical implement, regularly used as a muller. When employed as a pestle, it is used with a small portable stone mortar for grinding medicines and certain foods. Such an implement is shown in plate IV, fig. 4.

Perhaps the most delicate stone implement is the obsidian or flint arrow-head. This is quite carefully chipped and is attached to the foreshaft of the arrow by means of a sinew binding. Four such arrows with heads are shown in plate VI, figs. 3-6.

2: Barrett E-5 (no date) 1917 NT20 Washo NT20

BASKETRY.

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The Washo are quite justly renowned as makers of fine, coiled basketry. Certain of the Washo women make very smooth and excellent baskets and employ a great variety of designs. In many respects the basketry of the Washo closely resembles that of the Miwok to the west. Particularly is this the case with the coiled basketry. The twined basketry, on the other hand, resembles that of the Paviotso, especially the diagonal-twined cooking basket (plate VII, fig. 2),[2] the two types of burden basket (plate XIII, figs. 3-6),[3] and the two types of winnowing basket (plate XI,[3] and plate XII,[4] figs. 1 and 2).

[171]

[482]

MATERIALS.

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The principal materials used by the Washo in basketry are derived from the willow, *Salix*, which yields both unpeeled and peeled rods. These form the only foundation materials in coiling and the hard elements in twining. The inner bark of the willow furnishes the white sewing and twining elements and, when discolored in the sun, also a brown element.

The only other basketry materials used by the Washo are the root of the bracken, *Pteridium aquilinum*, which provides a black element, and the redbud, *Cercis occidentalis*, the bark of which furnishes a red element. This is obtained from the Miwok to the west as it is not an indigenous shrub to the Washo country, and is therefore sparingly used.

[439]
[137]

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The following tabulation gives the Washo names of these various materials:

Willow	hi'mû
Unpeeled rods	mi'mû
Peeled rods	agaiye'we
Peeled rods coiled for storage	pelesû'sûyewe
Brown sewing element	hîmû toto'coñi (literally, "willow sunburned"), also podocoñë'we, and poto'soñi

[1] [see cat. 116, p. 41--An.]
[2] [see cat. 116, p. 53--An.]
[3] [see cat. 116, p. 49--An.]
[4] [see cat. 116, p. 51--An.]

[P. 381, B]

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the Washo. It seems clear that the animal is held in special awe and esteem by modern Indians.

FISHING
(252a-294)

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789

Fishing appears to be far less subject to ritualization among the Washo than was hunting. Here again there may be a correspondence between the amount of ritual and the degree of certainty involved in obtaining the desired food. The Washo area is rated by Rostlund as being one of the higher fish-producing areas in North America. Certainly the many lakes, streams, and rivers were the source of great amounts of fish every year. Indians who could at most be described as only middle-aged, recount the tremendous numbers of fish which swept up the streams from Lake Tahoe during the spawning seasons. While the numbers may have varied from year to year, the large number of fish plus the intensive fishing methods employed by the Washo almost guarantee a large catch.

[787] [535] [782]

However, d'Azevedo reports that Northern Washo describe some degree of ritualism connected with fishing (d'Azevedo personal communication). Dreamers are said to have predicted the day of the spawning run. Dances were held and prayers said, suggesting a rather attenuated first-fish ceremony for some of the Washo (2618). Other Washo report "big times," which included dancing and prayer, during the spring gathering on the lake. However, in the actual catching of fish there was much less ritual.

[825] [439] [262]

Some fishermen carried a fishing medicine composed of dried larvae of the Ephydra hians (Say), called kutaavi by the Paiute (Heizer 1954) and motai bubuka by the Washo. These larvae were obtained from the Mono Lake Paiute in trade or as gifts. They were considered good food and are still eaten by some Washo. However, in addition they were credited with having great powers to lure fish and were rubbed on harpoons, hooks, and lines. Perhaps this material was considered a fish medicine because these larvae are said to be generated from the scales of a giant fish. This leviathan is reported to have traveled through all the lakes in the Sierran area looking for a lake large enough in which to live. At Mono Lake it scraped some scales into the water before it left to find a permanent home in Lake Tahoe (Steward 1936). Whether the Washo share this story with the Owens Valley Paiute, I do not know, but Mono Lake, because of its saline water and its lack of any fish life, is thought of with some fear and awe. Today I get the impression that some Washo still keep a bit of this material with their fishing gear, although they are apt to rationalize it as a lure rather than real medicine. It should be remembered that hook-and-line or spear fishing accounted for a much smaller percentage of the total annual take than did trapping, damming, netting, or other communal methods which entailed no ritual.

[773]

MISCELLANEOUS CONCEPTS ABOUT HUNTING AND FISHING

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A number of ritual activities cluster around hunting and fishing. Perhaps the most important is the requirement that women, particularly menstruating women, avoid the hunting and fishing equipment. If a woman touched such gear the owner would bathe it and pray

S:Kroeber E-5 (no date)1925 NT20 Washo NT20

tions—is put on a boy's cradle, of rhombuses on a girl's. Occasionally the cradle and hood are covered with buckskin, as in the eastern Great Basin.

DRESS AND IMPLEMENTS.

Sinew-sewed deerskin clothes for women are mentioned, but may possibly have had the same recent and eastern source as the small sweat lodge. Their description as consisting of a separate waist and skirt sounds rather unaboriginal.

Rabbits were taken in nets of a 3-inch mesh, 1½ or 2 feet wide, and as much as 300 feet in length. These were hung loosely on stakes or bushes. Sometimes two were set at an angle. When the animals were driven, they became entangled in the sagging net, and had their temples crushed by hunters that sprang out from concealment. All hunts organized on a large scale were under the direction of the chief of the rabbit hunt, *peles-lewe-tiyeli*, whose position was hereditary.

The bow was sinew backed and had recurved ends. The arrow was foreshafted, the quiver of deerskin had the hair side turned in. This indicates the usual north and central Californian type of weapon.

Piñon nuts, *tagum*, usually ground and boiled, were a commoner food of the Washo than acorns, *mali*, although these could also be gathered in some tracts and were obtained by trade from the west. The mortar was a hole in a bowlder, used without basketry hopper; the pestle usually an unshaped cobble. The metate was called *demge*. The mush-stirring paddle was called *k'a'ne;* the looped stick which was used for the same purpose Yokuts-fashion, *beleyu*.

BUILDINGS.

The house was of poles joined in an oval dome, thatched with mats of tule, much as among the adjacent Northern Paiute. In the mountains leaves or bark were used for covering. The winter house was a cone of slabs of bark, about 8 feet high in the middle and 12 feet in length, with a projecting entrance. It must have been very similar to the Maidu *kŭbe*.

The Plains Indian type of sweat lodge, a pole frame temporarily covered with skins or mats, just large enough to sit in, and heated by steam, was used instead of the earth-covered Californian sweat house, it is said. This form is likely to be a recent one, introduced with the horse, or possibly a reflex of a ghost-dance movement.

The dance or assembly house with roof of earth was known to the Washo, who call it *daya'lind;* but whether they built and used it, or had merely seen it in the west, is not clear.

	Washo		No. Paiute		C.Miwok		Great Basin
	Sa		Sa		Sa		141
Face length - women	5	120	5	117	7	118	
Face breadth - men	6	151	6	150	9	152	
Face breadth - women	4	145	5	140	7	143	
Nose length - men	6	55	6	57	9	56	52.60
Nose length - women	5	52	5	51	7	53	
Nose breadth - men	6	43	6	44	9	45	43.57
Nose breadth - women	5	40	5	40	7	41	
Ear length - men	6	69	4	67	3	73	
Ear length - women	5	67	5	66	3	72	
Ear breadth - men	6	34	4	34	3	35	
Ear breadth - women	5	35	5	30	3	35	

Although the use of such small samples in the above data limits the level of confidence we can have in any theoretical statements, a few tentative remarks may be made. In spite of linguistic and geographical barriers, the Washo appear racially very similar to their neighbors to both the east and west of the Sierra Nevada. [114]

The close similarity in the indices and measurements of these groups is an indication of a relatively large inbreeding population. On the other hand, the Washo sample showed a low degree of variability from one individual to the next, an indication that a small homogenous gene pool is present. There is ethnographic evidence to support both views. The Washo did intermarry with the Northern Paiute, in Antelope Valley and probably at the Honey Lake area as well. The Washo also carried on trade and social intercourse with the central valley Californian peoples. In fact, part of Gifford's sample (not included here) contained Washo individuals who had one non-Washo parent. One also hears of the social conservatism of the Washo and their past fears of Miwok and Northern Paiute raids, factors against outbreeding. 582 141 161 [143] [439] [648]

Social Organization

Compared with primitive peoples generally, the Washo kinship system is neither elaborate nor extensive. There is little emphasis on lineage or ancestors. "The Washo lacked sibs, lineages, and clans" (Freed 1960, 361). Reckoning of descent is bilateral. Certain behaviors that are rigidly prescribed in many primitive societies are absent in Washo society. There is no mother-in-law avoidance. Monogamy, polygny, and polyandry (fraternal) are all practiced, although monogamy is most common and polyandry is rare. Sororal polygny and the levirate occur, but neither the sororate nor the levirate are required. This writer has knowledge of only two apparently polyandrous marriages.[1] 61 611 602 606 595 587

Residence after marriage is usually bilocal (that is, patrilocal or matrilocal), but the couple may move in with relatives other than the parents. Inheritance 591

14. (8) In the other galis dangal lived Jack's youngest wife, her daughter, the mother of the three wives, and a related family consisting of a man (D¢beh¢¢sh, "gun shooter"), his wife, and three girls that walked down from Loyalton because "this galis dangal needed a man too." 592 596

15. (8) Shortly after Little Josie, her husband (Damtanga), three girls, and her mother moved to Truckee, her mother died so the family tore the galis dangal down. "Little Josie had her man make the new galis dangal big and four men worked together on it. Then her husband froze to death while hunting. She stayed in that galis dangal for about another year. She was glad to leave it when she married Budish and they built a new galis dangal over the hill." Budish brought a son (Sahin) by a previous marriage into the house. [768] [165] [587]

Little Josie's oldest daughter (Minnie Truckee) was not married, but she had a half breed "railroad daughter." The middle daughter (Josie) had a Washo husband (Jim Winters) in Reno and a son and daughter living with her. The youngest daughter, her White husband, and their three or four children lived in a separate cabin some distance from the galis dangal. [848] [361]

The mean number of occupants in these fifteen galis dangal is seven while the range is from three to thirteen. The number for any single galis dangal varied from season to season when the men and often the whole family moved to Lake Tahoe to fish, hunt, and gather plants. The Washo in the town of Truckee around 1900 worked at menial tasks for the Truckee Hotel or the sawmills and peddled the fish and game they caught to the White residents. Washo baskets were just beginning to be sold as curios to the Whites and probably not more than a dozen were made for sale in any given year of that period. [162] [221] [439]

Some Historical Considerations

175

History begins in the Washo territory comparatively late. We have no definite information on the presence of Whites in Washo territory prior to 1826. The Spaniards had been in California, primarily along the coast, sometime previous to this, but their contact is questionable and their influence was extremely meager.

The decade of the 1850's was for the Washo a period of the most rapid cultural and environmental change they have ever experienced. In those few years the White intruders displaced the Washo and changed their environment sufficiently to require them to depend upon the former for survival (Fairfield 1916; James 1921). [177]

In the early 1900's the Washo used the word "kavayo" for horse, which is related to the Spanish term, but this term seems to have been borrowed from 175 177 497

CHAPTER III

DISTRIBUTION

John C. Fremont made several contacts with the Washo Indians in January and February of 1844. He described a custom that reveals the essence of Washo economic distribution (Nevins 1956, 345-352).

"A party of twelve Indians came down from the mountains to trade pinenuts, of which each carried a little bag. These seemed now to be staple of the country, and whenever we met an Indian, his friendly salutation consisted in offering a few nuts to eat and to trade..."

And later "...when we reached a little affluent to the river at the bottom we suddenly found ourselves in presence of eight or ten Indians...Our friendly demeanor reconciled them and when we got near enough they immediately stretched out to us handfuls of pinenuts, which seemed an exercise of hospitality."

Gifts, as Fremont experienced, were part of everyday social intercourse among the Washo. Gifts were given in connection with births, puberty ceremonies, marriages, and deaths. As Fremont indicates, gifts also served to establish contact with strangers and to initiate trade.

In the quantitative terms of distributing total Washo production of goods and services, gift exchange was not very important. It was in the sphere of ideal values that gift exchange became important.

The value of sharing and of giving found expression in most of Washo economic distributions. Sharing (mibɛ shigihi) obtained at every level of Washo social organization. Sharing also decreased as kinship and residence distances increased. Non-Washo received the least of Washo sharing and yet Fremont and his party, although total strangers, were met with gifts and the invitation to trade. The person who would not share with others of the same household, or who was generally stingy (hutɛ tiki) would not be included in the networks of sharing and might be "talked out" of his household.

With various qualities of the transactions as our criteria, eight forms of economic distribution stand out in Washo society. These eight forms can be analysed in terms of the extent of "primary" and "secondary" social relations involved in each. Primary refers to relations between people with common goals and relations that are ends in themselves, intrinsically valued, "personal" in that the identity of the individuals cannot be changed without disturbing the relationship, "inclusive" in that the range or involvement

"Secondary" Distribution

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[525]
[434]

6. Gambling: economic competition via games of chance and skill.

7. Trade: immediate reciprocation and explicit negotiation.

8. Payment for Services: dispensing of "secondary" socio-economic debts.

Familial Sharing

431 Familial sharing is characterized by distributions resulting from the division
433 of labor by sex and age. This system accounted for roughly 70%-90% of all
571 Washo economic distribution. The importance of the various channels for the
592 flow of goods fluctuated seasonally and regionally, but the internal family system always predominated. Familial sharing pertained to relations in the household but was extended as a general value to include all of humanity. With the exception of gambling, trade, and some payment for services, all the major distribution systems in Washo economy appear to be derived from familial sharing. That is, they appear as extensions of the primary relations found foremost in the family.

Familial sharing is not considered an exchange in the economic sense because of the special character of the reciprocity. It has the quality of the true gift. That is, the return of an economic good or service is not required. Children, for example, may never be in a position to repay their parents with economic goods. The case wherein the producer consumes his own production immediately without actually pooling or sharing is here included under familial sharing.

Reciprocation may come in non-economic forms such as the attribution of status or religious services. In familial sharing there is often no reciprocation from others at all. The sharing may be in the form of a cultural prescription, unreasonable for an "economic man", but nevertheless done: a ritual, conservative, habitual form.

592 Since familial sharing was so important, we should understand something
596 of the household or domestic unit, particularly its composition, relations with other households, and its annual round of activities. A reconstruction of the composition of fifteen households in existence between 1885 and 1900 showed a range in number of individuals from three to thirteen and a mean number of seven individuals.[1] The household usually consisted of a core family

1. This research is summarized on pp. 8-10.

Trade

Trade and gift exchange were not clearly separate in Washo society. However, the language does distinguish between sharing (mibʔshigihi) and trading (damalu).[1] In trade there tended to be immediate reciprocation while gift exchange often involved a time lapse. Trade also tended to be competitive and to increase with less intensive social ties. Trade involved explicit negotiation and social status was secondary as a factor in the transaction. Trade involved an impersonal relation which focused on the economic goods rather than upon the social relations of persons involved.

Washo trade was an estimated one or two percent of the total distribution. Four types of trade are recognized: (1) silent, without face-to-face interaction; (2) personal, where personal ties are relatively important; (3) administered, based on governmental rules; and (4) market, which is relatively free from personal and governmental ties. Washo trade in this framework was "personal".

Hank Pete maintained that women would often trade under circumstances in which men would ordinarily give gifts. Trade proceeded with little haggling. The transaction was initiated by either a buyer or a seller. It took the form of propositions, questions, and answers such as "I'll trade you this for that. This one? No, that one! I need more for that one. Then I'll include this, too. We can trade then." Trade with non-Washo was conducted through gestures and a few key words understood by both parties, such as damalu for "trade".

The Washo lacked rigid standards of reference, that is, the valuation of two materials to be traded in terms of a third material. Goods were traded without reference to their value in other goods and without a traditional exchange rate. For this reason it was difficult to collect data on equivalencies of value or rates of exchange.

From descriptions of actual transactions, and by insisting on some relative values of objects, the following scale was established by this writer. Hank Pete said that rabbit nets were never traded. They were too valuable. Many things, because of tradition or personal desires, were not traded. Such things might be a shaman's paraphernalia, a bow that had killed a number of deer, or food and clothing needed for survival. Freed and Freed (n.d., 10) state that the loss or destruction of a shaman's curing implements was a cause of illness to the shaman.

Certain things were near the top of the value scale. A double rabbit skin blanket, a large coiled water tight cooking basket (giuleu), a whole buck deer, and three tanned deer skins were roughly equal in value. Hank Pete said he had never heard of anyone who had three tanned deer skins, and a

1. A loan word from Miwok, according to William H. Jacobsen, Jr. (personal communication).

person never traded a whole deer. This indicates that the hide was about one-third the value of the deer.

Pinenuts were often carried and stored in certain kinds of buckskin bags and willow baskets. A tugabul full of pinenuts in the shell was something of a standard of measurement. The tugabul was a coarse scoop-shaped, open twined tray used for winnowing and roasting. It would hold about five gallons of pinenuts leveled to the rim of the basket.

Another basket used for measuring was the bayudate which was a single rod coiled bowl-shaped basket that varied in capacity from about a pint to two quarts. By converting from tugabul and bayudate to pints, quarts, and gallons it was possible to describe the value of a few objects in terms of volume of pinenuts. The following relationships were estimated by Hank Pete for a period in the middle of winter when food surplus was somewhat low: (1) a magpie tail feather = 1 pint; (2) an obsidian knife = 1 quart; (3) a pair of moccasins, an eagle tail feather, or a tugabul basket = 2 quarts; (4) a sinew backed bow and three arrows with stone points = 4 gallons; (5) an untanned deer skin = 6 gallons; and (6) a tanned deer skin = 7 gallons.

It is assumed that in late winter, when pinenuts were more scarce, this ideal scale of values would shift so that fewer pinenuts were worth more manufactured goods. Considerably more research needs to be done in this regard. The influence of extreme scarcity on the character of economic distributions is a problem that cannot be dealt with here.

The Washo had little trade with non-Washo peoples. Several influences appear to have contributed to this fact. The languages of the surrounding peoples were unintelligible. The Washo lived in a mountainous country where transportation by foot was difficult and occasionally impossible in the winter. They also ranged a large, productive, and diversified environment that supplied almost every kind of good used except ocean shells. A trek from Carson Valley over the Sierra Nevada for acorns (malung) might take them into every kind of vegetation zone and natural habitat in the Sierras. Salt (ungabi)[1] was available in Antelope Valley, obsidian (patsaga) from Mono Lake country, and red ochre (sawasang) from an area south of the present town of Dayton, Nevada. Foods such as pinenuts (tagum), fish (atabi), rabbits (p¢lleu), and deer (m¢mdewi) were plentiful within Washo territory.

1. This word (ungabi) came from the Shoshonean stock of languages so that phonetic variations of it were used by the Northern and Southern Paiute, the Ute, and Shoshoni (Steward 1938, 275-283).

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The Washo lacked well tailored clothing necessary for extensive winter travel. Their techniques of production were geared to small scale household use so that tradeable surpluses were rarely acquired. The Washo were organized into small scale groupings with few specilizations of labor. They lacked adequate storage techniques for fish and game so that surpluses in these foods were not preserved. Also inter-tribal frictions and hatreds often prevented safe travel outside of Washo territory. There are indications that once the Whites established an effective government over Washo and surrounding territory, trade and marriage between Indians from different tribes increased significantly. The Carson Indian Boarding School, established in 1890, became an important factor in developing intertribal cooperation by providing a situation in which individuals from several tribes could meet and become friends.

[291] [433] [621] [463] [251] [628] [648] [871]

438

Certain kinds of goods were particularly heavy in the trade traffic of aboriginal Great Basin and California. Davis (1961, 12-4) gives an idea of what these items were in California. In order of importance they were marine shells and beads, salt, basketry, hides and pelts, bows, acorns, fish, pinenuts, obsidian, pigments, miscellaneous vegetal foods, rabbit skin blankets, arrows, and a number of less important items.

In one table Davis (ibid., pp. 12-4) lists 83 traded items. The Washo used 53 of these items. Except for five items made of marine shells and "Caucasian goods", all 53 of the items used by the Washo were gathered or made by the Washo.

[301] [439]

Pacific coast beads and pendants were used for personal adornment, but they were unimportant in face of the competition with local shell, plant, bone, and stone materials.

[439]

It is probable that all of the 53 items in the list by Davis were occasionally received by Washo from non-Washo through trade. Even items that were abundant within Washo territory such as pinenuts, fish, basketry, and rabbit skin blankets may have been received by trade in special instances. Lists of things traded are of little value unless they reflect volume.

439

The goods most exported to the Miwok and Maidu were salt, pinenuts, obsidian, skins, and several Washo manufactures such as rabbit skin blankets and basketry. In return the Washo received principally acorns, soaproot for combs and brushes, a variety of medicinal plants, and occasionally manufactures such as baskets and yew bows. Few acorns were received by the Washo through trade unless the local crop was poor. All the other plants traded were received primarily through gathering and not trade.

[114]

Both Davis (1961) and Sample (1950), in their summaries of California trade, repeated a view held by Barrett and Gifford (1933, 193, 221). It is

439 [114]

claimed that the Washo supplied the Miwok with buffalo skins. The Washo informants of the present writer have no recollection of buffalo ever being in their territory and deny the possession of buffalo skins received by trade from others.

222

The Washo went south to Mono Lake to gather fly larvae (mats¢bab¢shi). They also received them by trade from the Northern Paiute. Washo were in rather close contact with the surrounding Northern Paiute groups and traded with them for the whole range of goods produced. The Washo considered the Northern Paiute to be poor hunters and report providing them with deer skins in return for other goods.

Payment for Services

465

A payment for services was given to midwives (demedugetiyi?) and curing practitioners generally. The shaman (damomli) and curing practitioners were often paid according to their fame and the nature of the cure: If the shaman failed in his efforts to help the sick person he was not paid. If he was paid for a cure and the patient had a relapse the doctor was sometimes forced to return the fee. It is this flexible bargaining that makes goods handed to a shaman a "payment" rather than a "gift". If a number of patients died the shaman was considered to be a witch and was killed.

[476]

The additional meat received by an antelope shaman after a successful drive may be considered a payment for his services. There were of course many services among the aboriginal Washo that are not discussed here, such as combing another person's hair or aiding a neighbor in building his house. The economic distribution aspects of these services, however, fall into the categories of familial and task group sharing, rather than the more impersonal payment for services.

433

lowest level of a seven point scale of culture for native North America.

Trade, warfare, and communication provide the avenues for cultural diffusion. 433
If these avenues of communication lead to technologically advanced cultures, 439
we can expect economic development even if custom is sanctified and the 177
force of tradition is great. The greatest barrier to Washo economic development seems to have been their isolated territorial location. They were isolated from the surrounding high cultures in the Southwest, California, and the Northwest Coast. Barriers to trade were discussed above (pp. 50-51): mountain [133]
terrain, language differences, climatic extremes, lack of significant tradeable [628]
surpluses, location of sufficient resources within Washo territory, and inter-tribal hatreds. These barriers to trade were also barriers to economic development in that lines of diffusion remained weak.

Washo society was neither inventively productive nor absorptive. It does 433
not appear to represent a focal point for the development of any new and 178
more efficient solutions to the problems of survival. It appears rather, to have developed from big game hunting to a slightly more efficient base of [177]
hunting, fishing, and gathering. This development may have derived from the influence of Shoshoneans. More efficient techniques of gathering and storing fish might have raised their economy to the level of most Californians. Even in historic times the Washo have been slow in adopting agriculture and animal husbandry.

Manning Nash (Adams, et al, n.d., 23) suggested that the household was 433
not a very viable unit for economic expansion "because it is such a multi- 592
functional unit." Unlike the modern business firm, the household has many non-economic functions which conflict with its economic functions. This multifunctional character was present in all Washo socioeconomic groups.

The fact that the Washo did survive in their environment with a simple 433
technology attests to the culture's efficiency and viability. We simply raise the question of why they did not develop a more advanced economy and suggest that the kind of economy they had, with little inter-tribal trade and an orientation to the household, was a barrier to this development.

Prestige Economy and Money

The concept of a "prestige economy" came into use after DuBois (1936, 50) 433
defined the economic involvement in acquiring prestige among the Tolowa- 554
Tututni. She defined prestige economy as "a series of social prerogatives

Rabbit skins were also cut into strips and woven into warm robes. Conical houses were made of wooden poles and brush thatch for winter weather while a half-dome windbreak served for warm weather.

The household of a family and relatives in a single winter house was the basic socioeconomic unit of society. Each household worked and shared together in solving the problems of survival and fulfilling social and ritual obligations. The household continued to fish, hunt, and collect its food in a fairly uniform way year after year in the same sector of Washo territory. If the fishing was poor in one place, they moved to another stream. If the pinenuts failed, they went to the west and gathered acorns. And wherever they went, they hunted or gathered what was available: some tree grubs here, a lettuce-like vegetable there, and a squirrel or rabbit or bird at the next place. The procurement and preparation of food was clearly the most time consuming activity in Washo life.

Men and women often worked together at the same tasks, but there was some division of labor by sex. Men hunted and except for basketry, were the craftsmen who made the clothing, houses, and hunting and fishing gear. Women gathered plant and insect foods, prepared and cooked them, made the baskets, and tended the children. A few individuals specialized to a degree in becoming shamans, midwives, herbalists, or particularly adept in a craft.

Sharing, as the economic basis of family life, was the very essence of Washo economy. Sharing found expression in the producing task groups that drew members from more than one household. It was through sharing that the vast majority of goods changed hands. Exchange, with a stronger demand for reciprocal equivalence than sharing, characterized the economic aspects of social rituals, as well as the more impersonal forms of distribution such as gambling, trade, and payments made for services rendered.

Washo economy appears in a few ways to be distinctive in the Great Basin. The Washo ranged a particularly productive environment which allowed them the highest population density in the Basin. The Washo may have had less trade than the surrounding peoples because of several factors, language isolation being one. Pinenut groves were privately owned, a rare phenomenon in the Basin. Washo techniques for gathering and storing pinenuts, in strips and the construction of great caches, is also perhaps unique in the Basin and inadvertantly presented them with another unique phenomenon, overproduction.

There are still broad gaps in our knowledge of Washo aboriginal life. The data are fairly complete on language and mythology, but the rest of Washo culture has been only sketched out in its major outlines. Most of this is unrecoverable and only by careful interviewing, archeology, and scrutiny of historical documents can we hope to reconstruct a way of life that began to disappear over 100 years ago.

In spite of the moderate number of hold-overs from the old economic system, the economic base of modern Washo life has changed considerably since the 1850's. Today, the Washo live primarily through wage work on surrounding ranches and in the towns. The men are mainly unskilled laborers, although a few have trades and earn a good living. One man has grown wealthy in the lumber business. Women work as domestic servants, as dishwashers in restaurants, or in laundries. But women do not work unless they must, and they spend most of their time at home caring for their families. Most of the aboriginal survivals are in the female sphere of activity, for women can add considerably to the family income by preparing pine-nut and acorn flour and by weaving baskets for sale. The older people have pensions or receive social security payments and are economically independent of their children. Washo material culture is entirely American except for the items mentioned above and a few others. They now live in permanent settlements resembling small, American towns. The largest of these, Dresslerville, Nevada, has a population of 195. This is far larger than the number of individuals who lived together in prewhite settlements.

CEREMONIES OF THE LIFE CYCLE

A number of practices were formerly associated with childbirth. The mother ate no meat or salt for a month after the birth; the father observed the same taboos until the baby's umbilical cord fell off; and until the loss of the cord, husband and wife were forbidden sexual intercourse. Ceremonies involving the distribution of gifts marked the return of the father and mother to normal life, the former when the infant lost its umbilical cord and the latter a month after the birth.

Most of the customs surrounding birth are no longer observed. Some women still observe the food taboos; but if they have their babies in the government hospital, they generally eat meat when it is served. Often the doctors and nurses insist upon it. The men have given up all their previous observances. The custom of distributing presents following the birth of a baby is still maintained. It usually takes place two weeks after the birth and seems to be a merging of two aboriginal ceremonies: the one at the time of the detachment of the umbilical cord, and the second, when the mother is freed of all restrictions a month after the birth. The modern ceremony is called the "baby feast."

The girl's puberty rite or "dance," as the Washo call it, was the most elaborate of all the ceremonies of the life cycle. It lasted four days, and the Washo say that during this period the girl was "shaping her life." The principal features of the ceremony were: (1) the girl fasted four days and abstained from meat and fish for one month; (2) she worked very hard so as not to be lazy in later life; (3) on the fourth night, the girl climbed a mountain where she lit four fires; (4) she then raced a nonrelative back to the foot of the mountain, care being taken that she always won the race; (5) the girl danced until dawn on the fourth night of the ceremony and was then bathed. The entire ceremony was repeated when the girl had her second menses.

The puberty ceremony for girls is still held. In my interviewing, I have found very few women who had not had a "dance." Each woman who had not had a